

Notice of Exemption

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To:
Office of Planning and Research
For U.S. Mail:
P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From:
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, CA 93710



Street Address:
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

State Clearinghouse Number: 2021040737

Project Title: Major Amendment No. 1 to California Endangered Species Act (CESA) Incidental Take Permit (ITP) No. 2081-2020-043-04 for the Southern California Gas Company Line 85 Milepost 75.75/75.94 Pipe Recoat Project (Project)

Project Location: The Project is located in the southern San Joaquin Valley approximately 5.5 miles east of the town of Taft in Kern County, California. The Project is specifically located on California Department of Water Resources-owned land adjacent to and on both sides of the California Aqueduct near Lake Station Road within the USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangle Map Buena Vista Lake Bed in Township 32 South, Range 24 East, Section 12, MDBM; Latitude 35.158737, Longitude -119.350087 and Latitude 35.157882, Longitude -119.345651, and Latitude 35.164858, Longitude -119.349671.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has issued a CESA (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.) ITP and this Major Amendment No. 1 to authorize Southern California Gas Company to incidentally take Tipton kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratoides nitratoides*) which is listed as endangered under CESA (Fish & G. Code § 2050 et seq.; see Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 670.5, subd. (a)(6)(D)) and San Joaquin antelope squirrel (*Ammospermophilus nelsoni*) which is listed as threatened species under CESA (Fish & G. Code § 2050 et seq.; see Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 670.5, subd. (b)(6)(B)).

The Project includes activities necessary to activities associated with the inspection and repair of the coating of two approximately 50-foot long segments of the 26-inch natural gas pipeline (Line) 85 located at Mile Post (MP) 75.75 and MP 75.94 where anomalies have been identified. Major Amendment No. 1 makes six changes to the ITP. This Major Amendment No. 1 will: 1) modify the Project Area to add an additional Work Area located north and west of the two existing inspection and repair locations that will need to be excavated to fully expose the pipeline for MLV installation; 2) add activities related to MLV installation and inline pipeline inspection to the Project Description and Covered Activities; 3) add a Staging Area and a Vehicle Parking Area to the Project Description; 4) reduce the footprint of the Work Area east of the California Aqueduct to 95-foot long by 50-foot wide; 5) increase the total footprint of the Project by 0.07 acre; and 6) revises and accordingly replaces Figure 2 of the ITP with Figure 2a to depict the additional Work Area, Staging Area, and a Vehicle Parking Area within the modified Project Area.

Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project: Southern California Gas Company, Ileana Figueroa, Project Manager, 9400 Oakdale Avenue, SC9314, Chatsworth, California 91311.

Exempt Status:

- Statutory Exemption. California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15269, subdivision (b); Public Resources Code, section 21080, subdivision (b)(4)
 Categorical Exemption.

Reasons why project is exempt: See Attachment

CDFW Contact Person: Craig Bailey (Sr. Environmental Scientist, Supervisory), 559-243-4014, extension 227

DocuSigned by:

Signature: _____
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Date: 7/27/2021

for Julie A. Vance
Regional Manager, Central Region

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

**Attachment to Notice of Exemption
State Clearinghouse No. 2021040737**

**California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2020-043-04
Major Amendment No. 1
Southern California Gas Company Line 85 Milepost 75.75/75.94 Pipe Recoat Project
(Project)**

Approval of this Project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 *et seq.*) because the Project is subject to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15269, subdivision (b), “Emergency repairs to publicly or privately owned service facilities necessary to maintain service essential to the public health, safety, or welfare” and Public Resources Code, section 21080, subdivision (b)(4), “Emergency repairs necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency”. “Emergency” is defined as “a sudden, unexpected occurrence, involving a clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of, or damage to, life, health, property, or essential public services” (Pub. Resources Code, § 21060.3).

The Project includes the inspection and repair of the coating of two approximately 50-foot long segments of the 26-inch natural gas pipeline (Line) 85 located at Mile Post (MP) 75.75 and MP 75.94 where anomalies have been identified and the installation of an underground mainline valve and inline inspection activities. The repairs are needed urgently to protect the integrity and safety of the pipeline as well as to ensure service to natural gas customers is not impacted in winter of 2021. Additionally, repairs are needed urgently to reduce potential impacts to other pipelines in the vicinity of the California Aqueduct, and possibly to the California Aqueduct itself.

On June 23, 2021, the Permittee requested changes to the Project to be able to complete the Project as scheduled and to control gas pressure in Line 85 while performing the other necessary repairs. These changes will add an additional excavation area to access the pipeline for mainline valve (MLV) installation, add additional staging and parking areas, add MLV installation, pressure-control fitting (stopples) installation, and a robotic inspection tool launcher/receiver (LR) barrel installation on the pipeline as Covered Activities, and add equipment to be used at the site during construction. The additional MLV Work Area and staging/parking areas will increase the total Project footprint by 0.07 acre, but this will not result in an increase to the impacts to Covered Species habitat because these areas are within an existing disturbed roadway.

CDFW has determined that although this Amendment may result in an increase in take of the Covered Species, it will not cause an increase in Covered Species habitat impacts because the additional Work Areas are within existing disturbed roadway and the additional impacts of the taking will be minimized and fully mitigated through implementation of the Conditions of Approval. Because the impacts will be minimized and fully mitigated, there will be no increase in Project impacts to the Covered Species with this Amendment. Impacts will be minimized and fully mitigated through the implementation of measures required by Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2020-043-04, as amended. Measures include: 1) Monthly Compliance Reports; 2) establishment of avoidance zones; 3) worker education; and 4) permanent habitat protection.